



Minister for Consumer Affairs

1 Macarthur Street
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
GPO Box 4356
Melbourne, Vic 3001 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 8684 1400
Facsimile: +61 3 8684 1444

10 MAY 2010

Our ref: CD/10/128099

Mr David Griffiths
Secretary
Co-operative Federation of Victoria Ltd
71 Franciscan Avenue
FRANKSTON VIC 3199

Dear Mr Griffiths

CO-OPERATIVES NATIONAL LAW REVIEW

Thank you for your correspondence dated 12 February 2010 and 15 February 2010. I note your concerns about the consultation process on the draft provisions of the proposed Co-operatives National Law (CNL).

As you are aware, the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs appointed the New South Wales Office of Fair Trading to administer the project developing the CNL. This role includes not only the formulation of the proposed statutory provisions, but also consultation and communication with the co-operatives sector and related significant stakeholders, such as the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. The aim is to ensure that there is one source of consistent information for all parties and to avoid duplication of activities as much as possible.

I acknowledge that this process could mean that some, particularly smaller, co-operatives would not necessarily have the opportunity to fully participate in the project, if they are not kept informed of each stage. I have asked the Registrar of Co-operatives to monitor the process for me closely, to take steps to ensure that any potential communication gaps can be dealt with, and to ensure ongoing contact with you.

I have also asked the Registrar to write to each registered co-operative in Victoria to remind them of the project, and to provide an update of its progress and anticipated timelines for its completion.

At this stage, New South Wales is expected to enact the law in 2010. Other States and Territories will then proceed to apply that law in their own jurisdictions, or amend existing legislation to ensure its consistency within the next year. I have asked the Registrar to notify registered co-operatives of any changes to the Victorian *Co-operatives Act 1996* to ensure that there is sufficient information and time to prepare for changes.

In the meantime, Consumer Affairs Victoria will respond to any requests for information and advice on the proposed CNL. The responsible officer to contact is John Unkovich, Principal Legal Policy Adviser, via email (John.Unkovich@justice.vic.gov.au) or phone ((03) 8684 6301).

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TR', is positioned above the printed name.

**HON TONY ROBINSON MP
MINISTER FOR CONSUMER AFFAIRS**